



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

April 8, 2005

ICE EXTENDS RELIEF TO TSUNAMI-AFFECTED NATIONS *Extension through July 8, 2005*

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is extending the time frame for stays of removal granted to aliens from countries affected by the Dec. 26, 2004, earthquake and tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia.

Previously, ICE temporarily suspended all alien removals to Sri Lanka and the Maldives through April 7, 2005. This temporary suspension, which began Dec. 30, was in response to the humanitarian crisis and specific to these two nations due to the massive infrastructure damage.

Under the original policy, all citizens of Sri Lanka and the Maldives who had been ordered removed from the United States were afforded a stay of removal for 90 days, beginning December 30, 2004.

In response to ongoing concern about infrastructure damage in these countries, **this period is now being extended through July 8, 2005**. The granting of the stay of removal is automatic; no request or petition is necessary.

In addition, non-criminal aliens from other nations affected by the tsunami were allowed to request a stay of removal to remain in the United States temporarily. DHS and ICE reviewed each request and made determinations on a case-by-case basis. To date, a total of 49 stays have been granted.

DHS and ICE remain committed to the global effort to provide relief in the wake of the disaster and continue to coordinate with other branches of the U.S. government and the community of non-governmental organizations in offering technical support and assistance. DHS and ICE will continue to monitor regional developments and conduct ongoing assessments to determine the need for possible further action.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.